

Urban and Community Forestry and Wildlife Conservation

Situation:

Increasing development has led to smaller parcels of forested land and open space. Communities and small parcel landowners want to be further educated in the best practices for managing natural resources in urban and suburban areas including shade trees, landscapes, watersheds, and wildlife habitat, while making sound policy decisions regarding land use.

UNH Cooperative Extension's Public Value:

Educational programs and technical support to homeowners, and municipalities improve the health and aesthetic value of natural resources. In turn, property values, tax revenues and opportunities to promote tourism increase, and are providing a stronger economic base and quality of life for people who live in and visit the county. Cooperative Extension's Forestry and Wildlife Program staff work with landowners to help them maximize the economic, educational and ecological benefits of the land.

UNH Cooperative Extension's Response:

The Community Tree Steward/Natural Resources Volunteer Program educates volunteers in urban forestry and natural resources. The goals are to strengthen communities, promote social change, and enhance urban ecosystems. In return for their 11 weeks of training, Tree Stewards spend 40 hours volunteering in their communities, many serving on town boards and committees. As graduates they develop networks, form partnerships with residents, community officials and organizations, as well as with Cooperative Extension staff and other natural resource professionals. Volunteer activities include land conservation, community landscaping projects, adult and youth education, the NH Big Tree Program, and natural resource committee work such as the Invasive Species Outreach Group.

Mary Tebo, Extension Educator, Community Forestry, is also responsible for urban and community programming within Hillsborough County including a Green Roof Initiative, which includes the installation of Manchester's first green roof on City Hall. Mary conceived the idea for the demonstration project and began recruiting partners from the Manchester community in 2002. The essential project components, an appropriate site, city approval and funding finally came together in 2007 with the roof's installment. The GreenGrid roof absorbs up to 95 percent of an average rainfall. By slowly percolating through the plants and soil of the green roof, roof runoff occurs several hours after peak flows, giving sewer systems time to handle other runoff. Other benefits include energy savings, and wildlife habitat. This initiative has led to several other green roofs in Hillsborough and on UNH's Durham campus.

The NH Coverts Project, lead by Malin Clyde, also trains volunteers with the focus on promoting wildlife habitat conservation, and forest stewardship. Almost half of all Coverts volunteers serve on their town's Conservation Commission, extending knowledge of wildlife and habitat to these local decision-making bodies. There are currently 43 active Coverts Cooperatives in Hillsborough County.

How We Make a Difference:

- UNH Cooperative Extension provides extensive training to Community Tree Steward volunteers and Coverts Cooperators in return for their continued involvement in local projects. Hillsborough County Community Tree Stewards and Coverts Cooperators devoted a total of 15,442 hours last year, presenting workshops, serving on conservation commissions and land conservation organizations, performing trail work, managing urban and rural forest land, landscaping at public facilities, and providing hands-on education and natural resources workshops. Their time, when calculated at the 2007 value of \$19.51/hour for volunteer time (independentsector.org) represents \$310,273 in contributions to local programs.
- As a result of Manchester's educational demonstration green roof, four additional green roofs were established on the Hillsborough County Nursing Home in Goffstown, Families in Transition in Manchester, and on the Holloway Commons Dining Hall at UNH Durham.

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